

Re B1028 Issues in Wivenhoe

Date: 28 July 2014



Background

This report focuses on the problem created by increased traffic on Wivenhoe's main road from the University to the Railway Station which is designated the B1028.

This route bears all the main traffic flow into Wivenhoe from the University and from Colchester and in the direction of Clacton. Between the University and The Cross this highway also carries all of the traffic to Alresford which goes along Rectory Road.

Fortunately plans to build a cycle track along side the rural stretch of this road between the University and Wivenhoe, which was first proposed by Wivenhoe Town Council in 1998, are now well advanced and look likely to be implemented in 2015. This will make this stretch of the highway much safer not just for cyclists but also for motorists who risk a head-on collision when pulling out to overtake a cyclist.

During the last 10 years, around 400 new homes have been added in the two former shipyards located by the river. These extra houses have added substantially to the traffic flow on the B1028 from The Cross to the junction with Station Road, an area which has over 2,750 houses that all need to use this one road at some point along its length.

The bus service has also been substantially improved and there are now more buses on Wivenhoe's roads than ever before. The number of commercial vehicles delivering groceries and internet shopping to people's doors has also contributed to this traffic flow.

This report addresses the need to do something to ameliorate the present traffic situation and presents a proposal.



The Problem

Whilst the road is wide enough to handle the volume of traffic, including buses and commercial vehicles, the problem is caused by the number of cars parked along its length. This is not just cars belonging to residents who live along the road, but people who use the highway to park their car whilst visiting the Wivenhoe Surgery or the Wivenhoe Dental Practice that is situated fairly close to the Surgery.

These interruptions to traffic flow creates considerable frustration at times with drivers occasionally losing patience at being caught up in an impasse with vehicles trying to squeeze their way up and down what in places has become little more than a one way street.

In December 2013, the Neighbourhood Plan Group asked residents of Wivenhoe to complete a survey in which one of the questions asked was '*If you could change one thing in Wivenhoe, what would it be*'. The answer to this question was illuminating.

981 households responded to this survey. The most mentioned topics raised were the issue of traffic and roads:

These traffic-related responses were analysed as follows:

Reduce traffic / too many vehicles	55 responses (5.61%)
Car parking / enforce restrictions or need more	85 responses (8.66%)
Reduce speed limit / introduce traffic calming	74 responses (7.54%)
Traffic congestion, inadequate roads in and out	50 responses (5.10%)

Just getting rid of all the parked cars along The Avenue and the High Street, assuming for one moment that were possible, would translate the problem into one of speeding cars on this straight stretch of road. That would not be desirable as some parked along its length does force motorists to drive more slowly and more carefully. In any case, many of the people who live in The Avenue and in the High Street do not have off-road parking and therefore feel forced to park on the highway outside of their property.

A solution must recognise the needs of both motorists and residents.

Buses

Buses have become a particular hazard in this highway. They are large vehicles and these days frequent. This means it is quite often that two buses, or a bus and commercial vehicle, are involved in trying to pass each other in constricted stretches of the road. This is obviously just not possible but the problem is usually caused by drivers



of cars who follow too closely behind a bus and get sandwiched as a result with nowhere to go.

Usually such incidents, although occurring frequently, are mainly resolved amicably although with clear frustration for at least one of the drivers involved.

Anyone who travels on a bus through Wivenhoe is full of admiration for the skill and expertise of the drivers of these large vehicles. Clearly buses provide a hugely beneficial service for Wivenhoe residents and for the most part we believe that most other motorists are generally considerate. The problem occurs when a motorist is not thinking ahead and fails to anticipate the situation about to happen.

Residents have offered various solutions to these problems including reducing the number of buses on Wivenhoe roads. This would hardly be popular given the number of passengers to be seen using these buses.

Another solution could be to make the buses go round Wivenhoe in a one-way system by going down Rectory Road, along Belle Vue Road, and turning right to go up The Avenue.



Whilst this idea may have attractions to other motorists, bus passengers would be badly inconvenienced, especially those wanting to go to Brightlingsea from the Rosabelle Avenue area of Wivenhoe who would need to catch and alight from the bus in Rectory Road. There are other examples of people being inconvenienced in a similar way. This idea should therefore be discarded.

One Way System

Similarly, forcing motorists to drive a one-way system involving Rectory Road, Belle Vue Road and The Avenue, or one of the intermediate roads like Ernest Road, is hardly likely to be popular with motorists or residents and should be quickly discarded as impracticable. Individual motorists are of course free to adopt this practice if they wish.

Buses and Station Road

There are no alternative solutions for Station Road. As buses run at ten minute intervals during University term, if there are delays in the traffic in Colchester then quite often two arrive within a couple of minutes of each other. A number of times buses having been seen to reverse back down Station Road when a delayed bus starts up the hill just as the next one comes round the corner.

This situation gets even worse when a car arrives behind the bus, as is always inevitable..

The Solution

There is no perfect solution to this problem of traffic and parked cars, only compromise.

This compromise is to introduce passing bays at strategic points in The Avenue, the High Street and in Station Road. These passing bays can be located strategically at intervals down these roads. Some will be large enough to take buses whilst others may only take one or two cars.

These passing bays can be achieved without unduly affecting residents in The Avenue who have no on-site parking provision and who therefore park their car on the highway. See places highlighted in a later section that specifies where these passing bays can be located.

With regard to Station Road though, to create a passing bay part-way down this road must inevitably reduce the amount of highway space for parking cars.

Ideally a passing bay should be at least as long as a bus and one car to allow a car to pull in behind the bus. This would allow those drivers who appear to insist on following closely behind a bus some room to tuck themselves in behind the bus rather than being left stranded in the middle of the road with no room to do anything. This may not be possible in every case as in Station Road where the passing bay should be of only sufficient length to just safely accommodate a bus.

ECC Highways

ECC Highways Officer, Rob Macdonald, recently advised Cllr Julie Young that the request for a passing place to improve safety on this congested stretch has not passed validation. He said: "Frontages of properties at this location are generally small gardens and not many have space for off street parking. Any proposed parking restriction would likely face fierce competition from the residents as it would make them park elsewhere thus only moving the problem farther away. It is recommended at this point that no further action be taken."

Wivenhoe Society's Recommendation

In the view of the Executive Committee of the Wivenhoe Society there are a number of places in The Avenue and in the High Street where providing passing bays would NOT inconvenience residents or others who choose to park cars on the highway for whatever reason.

The High Street has already been marked out to delineate where cars can park on the highway. A passing bay in the vicinity of the Methodist Church in The Avenue was agreed a long time ago as part of the highway improvements required from the development of Cooks Shipyard. There does need to be a compromise on both sides to

alleviate the frustration of road users when negotiating so many parked cars at particular points in The Avenue and the High Street.

See specific locations proposed in this paper are contained in the next page.

Benefits of this proposal

The creation of regularly spaced passing bays down the B1028 where there are generally parked cars would:

- a) ease the flow of traffic through Wivenhoe's main road and down to the railway station
- b) Do so without unduly impinging upon those residents who do not have the benefit of off-road parking
- c) Make life much easier for drivers of buses and large commercial vehicles who have a difficult time negotiating this road with its parked cars.
- d) Assist the bus companies to run buses closer to their published bus timetables and thereby benefit the reputation of bus companies for reliability as well as their passengers
- e) Allow drivers of other commercial vehicles who also have pre-planned delivery schedules they are required to adhere to by their employers the possibility of being under less pressure through reducing potential delays and therefore, in consequence, drive more safely.
- f) The same applies to taxi-drivers who are similarly affected as commercial vehicles and whose livelihood is impacted when congestion occurs.
- g) Reduce the risk of vehicles mounting the pavement which are coming up from the bottom of Wivenhoe in the vicinity of Palmer Gardens.

Motorists using Station Road too would benefit from a passing bay somewhere in its length as the number of cars parked in that particular road during the day time (mixture residents and people using off-peak trains) and in the evening (residents) means that it is single lane working down most of its length when a bus is trying to also use the road. Fortunately the road is just wide enough for two cars to pass each other carefully despite the cars parked at the side of the road. Parked cars does keep the speed of traffic on this road somewhat constrained and should be welcomed. However a bus passing bay somewhere in Station Road would be very useful as would greater space at the head of Station Road to allow buses the room to complete their turn to free up the junction to allow cars to exit Station Road into the High Street.

Specific locations for passing bays

Passing bays should be created at the following places – see list below.

Note: It would be nice if every passing bay were capable of taking a bus, and perhaps a following car, but that would mean a lot of road taken up with passing bays which would inevitably reduce the opportunity for residents to continue parking cars on the highway. We feel it is not necessary for all passing bays to be of this size. Smaller bays would allow cars going down the B1028 a place to tuck in to let cars and other larger vehicles coming up from lower down in Wivenhoe to freely get past.

1. At 116 The Avenue. Increase the amount of space already available in front of the driveway to this property to provide a passing bay for a bus and a car.



2. There is an existing bus stop by 52 The Avenue which also has a driveway making an already acceptable passing bay. This bus bay is already larger than one bus and so is more than adequate.



3. 44 The Avenue. This house has a driveway with two access points on to the highway. The driveway is capable of accommodating at least three cars. Create a passing bay for a couple of cars outside this property as the resident appears to have adequate on-site parking. Creation of a passing bay at this location should not inconvenience the resident.



4. Create a passing bay for a couple of cars at least outside nos 28 and 30. These houses have replaced their front gardens with open driveways. If the passing bay extended in front of the Masonic Hall, which has its own car park at the rear of the building, the passing bay would be adequate for a bus to pull in too.



5. Create a passing bay outside the driveway of the Methodist Church and the adjoining Physiotherapy business which has its own on-site parking. This would still allow for one person to park their car in the road if they were not confident of parking in the on-site parking area.



6. In the High Street, create a passing bay outside the Library, utilising the driveway of both the Library and the adjoining property (on the uphill-side) and removing space for one parked car in front of the library.



7. In Station Road, introduce a passing bay part-way down this road suitable for a bus (only) by eliminating some on-street car parking. Also, extend the double yellow lines at the junction of Station Road with the High Street to allow a bus to complete its turn into Station Road so that motorists can exit from Station Road into the High Street.

PH/Wivenhoe Society
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